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Survey supports Picher options

By Janet Warford-Perry

A majority of Picher residents have indicated they are in favor of a buyout-relocation plan, according to results of a recent survey conducted by city officials.

According to information presented to City Council members by Mayor Sam Freeman, 113 residents favored relocation, 200 favored a buyout, and 179 people were not in favor of either option.

The survey was sent to out Feb. 23-24 to 688 Picher water customers, according to Freeman. He said the deadline for returning the cards was March 1, results were tabulated March 6.

“Most people were in favor of a relocation or buyout. Personally I don’t know how it would work out, but since the majority have spoken, I feel that’s the direction I should go,” Freeman told the council.

An earlier door-to-door survey of residents in Picher, Cardin and outlying areas concluded much the same result. Conducted by a private citizen’s group, the results, according to organizer John Sparkman, indicated 80 percent were in favor of receiving more specific information related to relocation and buyout options.

Freeman indicated he didn’t want anyone to be confused that the city’s survey has anything to do with pursuit of a wetlands project.

The council voted unanimously that a resolution be written by the city attorney concerning relocation and buyout. This would be circulated to council members for review and possible action during a future council meeting.

Freeman said he would be meeting with Governor Keating next Friday and would relay the results of this survey at that time.

The mayor said he was also “very interested” in the results of the updated information on children’s blood-lead levels, to be presented by the TEAL organization this evening at 7 p.m. at the Picher High School.